

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-64. **(Cancelled)**

65. **(Currently Amended)** A method of reducing or preventing flowering in a plant, the method comprising expressing a polynucleotide comprising a heterologous nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) nucleotide sequences encoding a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 3;
- (b) the coding sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 2; and
- (c) nucleotide sequences having at least ~~83~~95% identity with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b) wherein said nucleotide sequences encode a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence YESP(K/R), of SEQ ID No. 30 or 31 and which, when expressed, extends the vegetative-inflorescence phase, increases lateral branching, represses flowering in said plant in the first year of growth, and/or represses flowering in said plant after the first year of growth.

66. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 65, wherein the polynucleotide defined in section (c) has a percentage value of identity with the sequence of (b) selected from the group consisting of ~~83%, 86%, 88%, 90%, 92%, 95%, 97% and 99%~~.

67. **(Cancelled)**

68. **(Previously Presented)** The method of any one of claims 65 to 66, wherein the polypeptide encoded by said polynucleotide fragment includes the sequence YESP(K/R) located between residues about 100 and about 120 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

69. **(Previously Presented)** The method of any one of claims 65 to 66, wherein said plant is a biennial or a perennial.

70. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 69, wherein said plant is a perennial.
71. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to any one of claims 65 to 66, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of crops belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*; soybean; potato; oilseed rape; sunflower; alfalfa; sugar cane; cotton; herbs; fruits and vegetables; rosaceous fruits; vegetable brassicas[[]]; and woody species.
72. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to any one of claims ~~65-66~~65 to 66, wherein said plant is a monocot plant.
73. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim 65, the method comprising inserting an expression cassette which comprises a promoter operably linked to the ~~and a~~ polynucleotide as defined in claim 65 into a plant host cell, growing the said transformed host cell in a suitable culture medium and expressing said polynucleotide to produce the protein encoded by said polynucleotide, and wherein said expressed protein reduces or prevents flowering in said plant.
74. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to claim ~~72~~73, wherein said promoter is selected from the group consisting of a constitutive promoter, an inducible promoter and a developmentally regulated promoter.
75. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 73, wherein said promoter is selected from the group consisting of the monocot and dicot actin and ubiquitin promoters, monocot and dicot glyceraldehyde dehydrogenase (GAPDH) promoters, the cauliflower mosaic virus 35S (CaMV 35S) and 19S (CaMV 19S) promoters, the 35S CaMV promoter containing the translational enhancer (TMV omega element), the nopaline synthase (NOS) promoter, the octopine synthase (OCS) promoter.

76. **(Currently Amended)** A transgenic plant transformed with ~~a~~the polynucleotide as defined in claim 65 or ~~an~~the expression cassette as defined in claim 73.
77. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant according to claim 76, wherein said plant is a biennial or a perennial.
78. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant according to claim 77, wherein said plant is a perennial.
79. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant according to claim 76, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of crops such as those belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*; soybean; potato; oilseed rape; sunflower; alfalfa; sugar cane; cotton; herbs; fruits and vegetables; rosaceous fruits; vegetable brassicas; and woody species.
80. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant of claim 76, which is a monocot plant.
- 81.-85. **(Cancelled)**
86. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 65, wherein the polynucleotide defined in section (c) has 95% sequence identity with the sequence of (b).
87. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 65, wherein the polynucleotide defined in section (c) has 100% sequence identity with the sequence of (b).
88. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 86 or 87 wherein said plant is a plant belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*.
89. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 71, wherein said herbs are selected from the group consisting of anise, basil, bay laurel, caper, caraway, cayenne pepper, celery, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, leeks, lemon

balm, liquorice, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sesame, tarragon and thyme.

90. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 71, wherein said fruits and vegetables are selected from the group consisting of banana, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry, raspberry, carrot, coffee, eggplant, grapes, honeydew, mango, onion, papaya, peas, peppers, and pineapple.
91. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 71, wherein said rosaceous fruits are selected from the group consisting of apple, peach, pear, cherry and plum.
92. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 71, wherein said vegetable brassicas is brussel sprouts.
93. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 71, wherein said woody species is selected from the group consisting of eucalyptus, oak, pine, and poplar.
94. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said plant is a plant belonging to the grass family of Poaceae.
95. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said herbs are selected from the group consisting of: anise, basil, bay laurel, caper, caraway, cayenne pepper, celery, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, leeks, lemon balm, liquorice, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sesame, tarragon and thyme.
96. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said fruits and vegetables are selected from the group consisting of: banana, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry, and raspberry, carrot, coffee, eggplant, grapes, honeydew, mango, onion, papaya, peas, peppers, pineapple.
97. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said rosaceous fruits are selected from the group consisting of: apple, peach, pear, cherry and plum.

98. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said vegetable brassicas is brussel sprouts.
99. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 79, wherein said woody species is selected from the group consisting of: eucalyptus, oak, pine, and poplar.
100. **(Currently Amended)** The plant according to claim 94, wherein the polynucleotide defined in section (c) has 95% identity with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b), wherein said nucleotide sequences encode a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence YESP(K/R)~~in said plant~~, of SEQ ID No. 30 or 31 and wherein said plant ~~possesses~~ possesses extended vegetative-inflorescence phase, increased lateral branching, repressed flowering in the first year of growth, and/or repressed flowering after the first year of growth.
101. **(Previously Presented)** The plant according to claim 94, wherein the polynucleotide defined in section (c) has 100% identity with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b) wherein said nucleotide sequences encode a polypeptide having LpTFL1-like activity and comprising the amino acid sequence YESP(K/R) of SEQ ID No. 30 or 31 in said plant.
102. **(Currently Amended)** A transgenic plant comprising a first and a second polynucleotide, wherein
- (i) said first polynucleotide is selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) nucleotide sequences encoding a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 3;
 - (b) the coding sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 1 or SEQ ID NO: 2; and
 - (c) nucleotide sequences having at least ~~85~~95% identity with the nucleotide sequence of (a) or (b), and
 - (ii) said second polynucleotide is capable of regulating expression of said first polynucleotide sequence, and
- wherein at least one of said first and second polynucleotide sequences is heterologous to said plant.

103. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant according to claim 102, wherein said plant is a biennial or a perennial.
104. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant according to claim 102, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of crops such as those belonging to the grass family of *Poaceae*; soybean; potato; oilseed rape; sunflower; alfalfa; sugar cane; cotton; herbs; fruits and vegetables; rosaceous fruits; vegetable brassicas; and woody species.
105. **(Previously Presented)** The transgenic plant of claim 102, which is a monocot plant.